

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 204844

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO COPENHAGEN, HELSINKI,
STOCKHOLM, REYKJAVIK, NATO FROM OSLO OCT 11.

QUOTE OSLO 3774.

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT MCAP NO

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FUTURE PRIME MINISTER TRYGVE BRATTELI

1. SUMMARY: I USED THE EXCUSE OF EUROPEAN CHIEF OF MISSIONS
CONFERENCE TO OBTAIN APPOINTMENT ON OCTOBER 9 WITH FUTURE
PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI WHO IS BUSY FORMING HIS CABINET.
IN OUR 40-MINUTE MEETING, BRATTELI SPOKE APPARENTLY FREELY
BUT WITHOUT MAKING ANY REVELATIONS ABOUT HIS FUTURE PLANS;
HE SEEMED SOMEWHAT TENSE AND TIRED. HE WAS MORE CAUTIOUS IN
HIS EVALUATION OF NORWAY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD NATO AND THE
NEW PROPOSED DEFENSE BUDGET THAN OTHER POLITICIANS WHOM
I HAVE RECENTLY MET, NOTING THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT
THE IMPACT OF THE STRENGTHENED LEFT AND "NEW TRENDS" IN
THE WORLD. HIS ATTITUDE HARDENED PERCEPTIBLY WHEN I BROUGHT
UP QUESTION OF SOUTHERN FLANK COUNTRIES OVER WHICH WE
TRADITIONALLY DIFFER IN NATO. WHILE CONFIDENT HE CAN HANDLE
THE LEFTISTS IN PARLIAMENT, HE INDICATED HE PLANNED TO
RETAIN SOME OF THE STRONGER LABOR PARTY LEADERS THERE RATHER
THAN BRINGING THEM INTO HIS CABINET. ON OIL POLICY, HE
FAVORED A CONSERVATIVE APPROACH TOWARD EXPLOITATION.

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WHILE OBVIOUSLY SENSITIVE TO THE DAMAGE THAT WATERGATE

BUT PARTICULARLY VIETNAM HAS DONE TO AMERICA'S IMAGE IN NORWAY, HE STRESSED THE DEPTH OF OUR LONG-STANDING BILATERAL TIES. END SUMMARY

2. NATO AND DEFENSE BUDGET. BRATTELI'S MOST INTERESTING REMARKS CONCERNED THE DANGER ON THE LEFT AS IT MIGHT AFFECT NATO AND HIS DEFENSE BUDGET. HE INDICATED MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE SOCIALIST ELECTORAL ALLIANCE (SV), INITIALLY UNDERSCORING THEIR INEXPERIENCE IN THE PARLIAMENT WHERE ONLY FINN GUSATVSON OF THE 16 SV MEMBERS HAVE PREVIOUSLY SERVED. HE FURTHER NOTED THAT SUDDEN GROWTH TO 10 PERCENT OF STORTING WOULD PRESENT SV WITH MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF OPERATIONS THAN HIMSELF AND LABOR PARTY. HE FOUND SV'S PROPOSAL FOR A 25 PERCENT CUT IN DEFENSE SPENDING SO UNREALISTIC AS TO BE EASY TO HANDLE. HE WOULD BE MORE CONCERNED, HE SAID, IF SV GOES THROUGH THE DEFENSE BUDGET ON AN ITEM-BY-ITEM BASIS. HE NOTED THAT THE LEFT HAS PUT FORWARD PROPOSAL TO REDUCE DEFENSE SPENDING AND GET OUT OF NATO EVERY TIME THEY HAVE BEEN REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT. HAVING SAID THAT, HOWEVER, HE COMMENTED THAT IT IS HARD TO PREDICT WHAT THE IMPACT WILL BE OF HAVING SO MANY SV MEMBERS IN THE STORTING. HE ALSO SPOKE OF THE DIFFICULTY OF PREDICTING HOW NORWAY'S ATTITUDE TOWARD NATO WILL EVOLVE, GIVEN "NEW TRENDS" IN THE WORLD, BUT UNDERScored HIS PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR THE ORGANIZATION. ALMOST WISTFULLY, HE NOTED THAT WE ARE NO LONGER DEALING WITH THE USSR OF "COMRADE STALIN." WHEN I LATER REFERRED TO OUR KNOWN DIFFERENCES CONCERNING SOUTHERN FLANK COUNTRIES LIKE GREECE AND PORTUGAL, HE STATED FIRMLY IN A TONE MAKING CLEAR HE SHARED HIS COUNTRY'S GENERAL DISTASTE FOR THESE COUNTRIES, THAT IF A MILITARY ORGANIZATION IS TO SURVIVE IN A PERIOD OF RELAXED TENSION IT MUST REFLECT THE "VIEWS OF THE COMMON MAN."

3. NEW APPOINTMENTS. BRATTELI SAID HE WOULD COMPLETE THE SELECTION PROCESS OF HIS CABINET THIS WEEK AND ANNOUNCE IT ON THE WEEKEND. HE CONFIRMED HE WAS KEEPING CERTAIN PEOPLE IN THE STORTING WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN MINISTERS IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND THERE, RECALLING THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO SERVE IN THE STORTING IN 1964 FOR THE

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SAME REASON. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE STORTING (GUTTORM HANSEN), VICE PRESIDENT OF THE LOWER HOUSE (AASE LIONAES) AND CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE (NOT YET ANNOUNCED). HE INDICATED SOME REGRET THAT SV WOMAN DELEGATE TORIL SKARD WAS NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE UPPER HOUSE--LAGTINGS). ASKED WHY LABOR SHOULD HAVE GIVEN THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSHIP TO THE CONSERVATIVES, BRATTELI SAID THAT IT IS CONSIDERED BY POLITICIANS AS ONE

OF THE LEAST DESIRABLE ASSIGNMENTS. THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER COMMITTEES ARE THOSE FOR EDUCATION, SOCIAL AFFAIRS, ETC. BRATTELI EMPHASIZED THAT, WHILE FOREIGN AFFAIRS MIGHT NOT BE POPULAR ASSIGNMENT, HE PLACED GREAT IMPORTANCE ON WHO IS FOREIGN MINISTER, ADDING HE HAD NOT YET MADE HIS SELECTION.

4. COMMON MARKET. WHEN I ASKED ABOUT THE COMMON MARKET, BRATTELI STRESSED NORWAY'S INEXTRICABLE ECONOMIC LINKS WITH THE CONTINENT BUT SAID THAT QUESTION OF ENTRY COULD NOT BE PUSHED FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE HAVING HAD SUCH A DIVISIVE EFFECT ON THE COUNTRY, POLITICAL PARTIES, AND EVEN FAMILIES. HE ADDED THAT IT WOULD TAKE SOME SPECIAL OUTSIDE DEVELOPMENT TO MAKE ENTRY AN ACTIVE ISSUE AGAIN. ASKED WHAT SORT OF DEVELOPMENT HE COULD ENVISAGE, HE SPOKE ONLY OF THE IRRATIONAL ELEMENTS WHICH HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN THIS QUESTION.

5. OIL POLICY. BRATTELI SHOWED HIMSELF TO BE A FIRM SUPPORTER OF THE PRESENT CONSERVATIVE GO-SLOW POLICY. HE SAID, AS ONE OF FEW PEOPLE IN NORWAY WHO HAD NOT BECOME OIL EXPERTS, HE FAVORED A BALANCED POLICY WHICH WOULD NOT DAMAGE NORWAY'S TRADITIONAL INDUSTRIES E.G. BY COMPETING FOR LABOR. IF "NATIONAL COMPANIES" HAD THEIR WAY, HE SAID, THEY WOULD EXHAUST OIL RESOURCES IN 10-15 YEARS STRANDING ANY INDUSTRY CONSTRUCTED AROUND OIL.

6. U.S.-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS. I ASKED BRATTELI CONCERNING THE AMERICAN IMAGE IN NORWAY. HE SAID THAT, WHILE WATERGATE HAD NOT BEEN HELPFUL, IT COULD NOT COMPARE IN IMPACT WITH VIETNAM. HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THE DEPTH OF RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, BASED IN PART ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF EVERY NORWEGIAN THAT THERE ARE ALMOST AS MANY OF HIS COUNTRYMEN LIVING IN THE U.S. AS IN NORWAY. BRATTELI NOTED THAT NORWAY HAS HAD CLOSE TIES TO THE CONTINENT

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THROUGH TWO WORLD WARS, BUT THAT ITS RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. HAVE BEEN OF A LESS UNEVEN, MORE CONSISTENT LONG-TERM CHARACTER. BYRNE UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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